

SPARKLING GREY



Turning silver into gold through management strategies that effectively address an ageing and multi-generational workforce

IO4 - Guide for age-friendly multi-generational (on-the-job) activities

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1 Introduction

The project SPARKLING GREY aims to providing SMEs of textile and metal sectors with adjusted and innovative human resources management strategies that address age and multi-generational issues while supporting career management skills specifically targeted to senior workers.

Project objectives:

- ◆ Raise awareness to the potential of an aged workforce;
- ◆ Improve age management strategies in SMEs from the metal and textile sector;
- ◆ Make a lifelong learning a reality to senior workers;
- ◆ Increase the availability of innovative and tested tools for fostering the creation of age-friendly workplaces;
- ◆ Increase opportunities for professional development and strengthen the cooperation and networking.

Direct target groups (primary target group):

- ◆ SME business owners/general managers/Human Resources managers;
- ◆ SME senior employees;
- ◆ Trainers, consultants and guidance professionals;
- ◆ Experts and policy makers;
- ◆ Partners organisations and staff.

Indirect target group (secondary target group):

- ◆ Guidance and training providers (and their professionals) which will incorporate the elaborated project products into their offer;
- ◆ Companies and their HR departments;
- ◆ Public and private labour actors/employers and employees' associations;
- ◆ Opinion and policy makers.

The aim of this guide is to provide a set of activities targeting workers and to be implemented on the job to foster 4 topics: **Intergenerational learning (IGL), The attraction and retention of senior workers, Transfer/ Retention of knowledge and Multigenerational teams.** Activities shall be planned to be simple and easy to use assuring that workers can understand the guidance provided and implement them by themselves. At any case, in some examples supervision or guidance from HR managers, Managers or line managers might be required.





Led by ESE this output includes three major activities with an estimated duration of 19 months (M6-M24):

- ◆ **Activity 1) Preparatory measures (5 months: M6-M10)**
 - Definition of the design for the macrostructure of the guideline.
- ◆ **Activity 2) Implementation (9 months: M10-M18)**
 - Development of the activities
 - Translation of the content into the different national languages.
- ◆ **Activity 3) Validation and fine-tuning (7 months: M18-M24)**
 - Testing and improvement of the guidelines requiring the active participation of end-users.

All partners will carry out these activities at a national level. In Spain FVEM, FFE and FYG will work together to achieve the expected results. In Portugal, the same will happen with INOVA+ and CITEVE.

- ◆ Each partner will involve:
 - I. 5 SME's
 - II. 10 employers/managers/HR managers
 - III. 10 senior employees
 - IV. 10 experts,
 - V. 5 employers'/employees' representative organisations



2 Context

Over the last decade discussions on age management in business have multiplied. Indeed, this is the first time in modern history that four different generations can be part of the workforce at the same time (Noorani, 2014; CEDEFOP, 2012; Stanley, 2010).

Noorani (2014) classifies the four generations as: The Silent Generation, the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (also known as the Millennials). Arranged by age, the Silent Generation is the oldest and typically includes people born between 1925 and 1945. The Baby Boomers are the largest generation and comprised of individuals born between 1946 and 1964. Next is Generation X whose members were born between 1965 and 1980. The Millennials, who are the youngest generation in the workforce, were born after 1980. The author also notes that the "Silent Generation places more importance on status and autonomy, while Baby Boomers and Generation X place more importance on working conditions, security, co-workers, and compensation". The later author also argues that Millennials value email communication, social media, fun at work, and continuous learning more so than Baby Boomers. Baby Boomers, however, report valuing professionalism more than Generation X, but not more than the Millennials.

Employees of all age groups often see belonging to a specific age group as a predictor of particular attitudes to work and the formal and informal rules associated with it. According to Meda & Vendramin (2016) any distinctive behaviour evoked usually concern the older or younger generations, the middle one being less mentioned in discussions of age. Nevertheless, recent studies such as the one carried by IBM in 2016 have showed that even if these divisions in behaviours and aspirations are not in reality that marked in the working environment, stereotypes persist. As these stereotypes guide the perception that employees have of their colleagues, it is very important to address them especially when conflicts arise concerning different time management habits (the young generation tending to plan less and work upon short deadlines or being less punctual), different relations towards authority (the young generation tending to accept less control) and different needs of recognition. Therefore, we conclude that one of the main issues nowadays is intergenerational management which is defined as *"the art of making collaborators of different ages live and work together efficiently capitalizing on their differences and what binds them together"*

According to OMIG (the French observatory for intergenerational management), in 2017, in France:

- 7 out of 10 companies constitute intergenerational teams in order to boost innovation and creativity.
- 50% develop actions to fight against age stereotypes.

Nevertheless, 82% of companies consider that intergenerational issues are not completely solved.

- If incomprehension between generations is being bridged, 43% of respondents consider that after a certain time hierarchical relations between the younger and the older workers get tense





- 87% of younger workers are considered impatient.
- Managers point that 6 multigenerational teams over 10 are affected by differences in time perception and time management.
- Although it has progressed, the transmission of knowledge and competences is insured in only 32% of companies.
- When organized, intergenerational collaboration allows modernizing the company and satisfy 49% of workers.

As demonstrated, there is a necessity to boost intergenerational collaboration at work through formal and informal tools and activities. One of the central goals is to individualize workers experiences and professional paths in the company and engage them in activities independently of his age or seniority but in function of his aspirations.





3 About this guide

From the literature review the consortium has gathered tips and recommendations on how companies should address challenges related with a diverse workforce and workplaces. The most addressed topics were related to promote age-friendly organisational culture and how to help senior workers to prolong their work life and thus, retaining them in companies for longer. Almost every set of recommendations would mention the need of re-skilling silver workers to match the company's needs and save costs in training and recruiting new employees. In terms of tools, they concern mostly websites, guides, and online surveys to support the organisational culture change towards an age-friendly one, to foster multi-generational activities and to implement a formal inter-generational learning system. From the total exercises, tips, methods and tools, they were target for employers and human resources managers overall. It was noticed that there is a lack of initiatives to help workers in their late careers onto find a new path towards an active ageing as well as to prepare retirement.

As for the most relevant format for the guide, here are the findings:

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Findings of O1 online questionnaires

Preferences of workers involving guides:

Format: Both online & offline (49.4%)

Extension: Short/Focused - less than 20 pages – (62.4%)

Target group: Workers (89.4%), Line Managers (69.4%), HR Managers (68.2%), Managers/Board (54.1%)

Topics: Retention of talented senior workers (75.3%), Training&Development of senior workers (68.2%), Multigenerational teams (57.6%), Mentoring and tutorial programs for hosting new employees (55.3%)

Methods: Practical tips/instructions (81.2%), Best practices (71.8%), Exercises (48%)



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The proposals in this guide are therefore addressed to workers and concern four different topics linked to intergenerational management: intergenerational learning (IGL), attraction and retention of senior workers, transfer/retention of knowledge and multigenerational teams.

Intergenerational learning (IGL) -. can be considered as the reciprocal exchange of knowledge between people of different ages so that they can learn together, and learn from each other and with those who participate in various fields such as culture, environment, sociability, education, etc. (European Network for Intergenerational Learning, 2014).

The attraction and retention of senior workers – it entails to examine the organisational factors



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that can facilitate their integration and participation (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). Retention of employees can be viewed as “the process that involves maintaining the employees' labour competencies by keeping them motivated, emotionally active and encouraged” (Bejarano, 2013).

Transfer/ Retention of knowledge - The process of “knowledge transfer” happens when knowledge, ideas and experiences are shared from the source of knowledge to the recipient source. The knowledge retention will depend on how the knowledge is transferred and on the background of the knowledge recipient. The recipient has retained a certain knowledge when it can easily recall or apply that knowledge in accurate situations. For Marosi (2013), knowledge transference refers to the act of sharing, learning new knowledge and experiences within a company (and between companies). Potential loss of knowledge, experiences and skills may result from employee retirements and should be prevented. One of the expected effects of the demographic aging is the knowledge crash and the high propensity of massive loss of strategic and even essential knowledge for private, public and international organisations, as well as for social groups (Ermine, 2010).

Multigenerational teams - are the result of different generations being part of the workforce at the same time. The term generation signifies the grouping of people within similar age groups, born in the same time of history and culture”. A generation typically range 15-20 years between them (Stanley, 2010) so this can be interpreted as the most diverse and multi-generational workforce ever experienced.

Each activity proposed tackles one of the issues above and is to be organised in the place of work. For each one we give guidance on the target group, estimated duration, objective and content of activities, implementation and evaluation. Please note that these are suggestions and do not need to be copied identically: each company can adapt it to its structures and needs and use the template proposed to create new activities. Moreover, although the activities are aimed at workers and not managers, it is essential to integrate the managers in the activities conception and evaluation phases and it is very important for the managers to recognize the value of such activities and take them into consideration when drafting workers timesheets.

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Template for designing the activities

Name of the activity:
Topic addressed:
Target group:
Estimated duration:
Objectives and description:
Guidelines for implementation:
Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity:
Resources and material needed:



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A PPT template for designing the on-the-job activities is provided in Annex to this guide and contains a set of recommendations on how to use it. Each activity shall be included into a single and separate document.



4 Suggested on-the-job activities for further development

This section includes suggestions of different on-the-job activities which were collected during the research phase and after partners' discussions and reflections. This indicative list shall not prevent partners of finding or developing better or more adjusted examples of on-the-job activities that can be more useful for the target groups of the Sparkling Grey project.

Besides, the examples provided do not contain all the information for the activity implementation and thus, in case of any partner decide to use any of the examples provided will have to develop it further.

4.1 Activities to foster intergenerational learning (IGL)

1. Activity: Creation of communities of practices (expert working groups)

Topic addressed: IGL

Target group: All workers (ideally 7 per expert group)

Frequency and estimated duration: 1 month (weekly reunions of 30 min). The frequency of reunions is decided by participants.

Objectives and description: The goal is to institute working groups which develop and disseminate the knowledge on a particular subject/area. It allows to value workers knowledge and to allow learning through shared best practices.

Guidelines for implementation: Identify a worker that will be the initiator (with the help of line managers). Members of the group choose a precise topic related to a certain work method or the functioning of a specific machine, institute clear objectives for the group, agree on meeting dates and on deliverables (manuals, toolkits etc). Workers and managers disseminate the existence of the expert group and of its deliverables. NB: establish a participant list for each expert group and reunion.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: roundtables and short questionnaires

Resources and material needed: meeting room, projector, computer



2. Activity: The organisation of common meals and creation of convivial places (cafeteria, rest room)

Topic addressed: IGL

Target group: All workers, 6 or 7 per table

Frequency and estimated duration: Weekly meetings, 15 to 30 min

Objectives and description: The goal is to impulse informal activities between workers of different age groups but of a same sector or having the same interests. This gives the possibility to exchange about work experience, formation, technical knowledge or even hobbies.

Guidelines for implementation: Top managers should agree to dedicate a place for informal meetings/ for meals. Workers should have the initiative to organize meetings and define topics of interests. Managers can help disseminate different initiatives in a same sector or cross sector.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Informal talks with managers and colleagues

Resources and material needed: Meeting place.

3. Activity: The creation of duos for mentoring younger/ older worker (by age)

Topic addressed: IGL

Target group: all workers as long as they volunteer, create duos by department/sector

Estimated duration and frequency: 1 month (weekly meetings from 15 to 30min)

Objectives and description: The goal is to pair a young worker with an older worker from the same department to foster intergenerational communication. They can discuss about working techniques, health, training, competences, hobbies etc

Guidelines for implementation: The duo should volunteer for the task; they can choose their partner or be defined by the manager. The meetings should be short (15 to 30 min) and flexible according to the partners' preferences. They also choose the topics they want to address

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Organise an evaluation session with roundtables: one of mentors, one of tutored and a mixed table. The session should be coordinated by an external partner (if possible). The roundtable should allow to point problems and solutions and to confront different points of views. They are useful to address stereotypes and can result in mutual learning. NB: establish a participant list.

Resources and material needed: Meeting place, if needed the evaluation of an external expert



4. Activity: The creation of mentoring duos for new workers

Topic addressed: IGL

Target group: New workers

Estimated duration and frequency: 1 month (weekly meetings from 15 to 30 min)

Objectives and description: The objective is to pair newly recruited workers with seniors (seniority being calculated according to time spent in the company not automatically by age). It allows the new worker to ask questions, get advice, to exchange with his mentor about their mutual experiences and expectations, to be introduced to his peers by its mentor creating a more welcoming environment and to foster adherence to the company's values.

Guidelines for implementation: The mentor should volunteer and the duo can be introduced by the line managers who can also participate in the evaluation phase. The meetings should be short (15-30 min) and flexible. Suggestion of topics: explanation of the rules of the company, working methods, administrative issues, competences but also informal topics such as hobbies, tips for health and transportation, relations with colleagues.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Meeting with the manager, answering anonymous questionnaires. Possibility of organising group sessions evaluations with roundtables: one of mentors, one of tutored and a mixed table.

Resources and material needed: Meeting place, short questionnaire

5. Activity: Job rotation duos

Topic addressed: IGL

Target group: Older and younger workers (volunteers)

Estimated duration and frequency: Can last from 2h to half a day and be repeated as often as needed.

Objectives and description: The objective is to give workers an overview of the different functions existent in their company/ in their department and to foster intergenerational communication.

Guidelines for implementation: These duos should be proposed to volunteer workers. Line and HR managers can advertise them and if needed advise workers on new skills they can develop. Older workers can accompany younger workers or vice versa in their daily tasks. This can last half a day and be repeated as often as needed with the agreement of the duo and their manager.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Questionnaire (if needed, anonymous), roundtables. The duo can report to their managers but in this case the comments might be more



restrained.

Resources and material needed: /

6. **Activity: Breakfast debate**

Topic addressed: IGL

Target group: All workers (preferably 10 to 15 each session)

Estimated duration and frequency: Once a month, 30 min

Objectives and description: Foster intergenerational communication between workers, improve the working environment

Guidelines for implementation: This activity requires some previous preparation, the approval of managers and the dissemination of the date, time and place of the debate. The topic is decided beforehand (as it might require the presence of outside speakers) but workers can suggest the topic they want to talk about: health and well being at work, recent events etc

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Questionnaire

Resources and material needed: Available room, food and drinks

4.2 Activities to foster the attraction and retention of senior workers

7. **Activity: Facebook group to share events exterior to the company**

Topic addressed: Attraction and retention of senior workers

Target group: All workers

Estimated duration: Indefinitely

Objectives and description: Foster informal communication, federate workers and create additional bounds based on shared interests and hobbies

Guidelines for implementation: One of the workers can create a Facebook group. Rules should be established in advance and published in the group. One or two workers should volunteer to be moderators of the group.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: To measure the success of the group, look at the number of participants and frequency of posts.



Resources and material needed: Computer, internet, Facebook account

8. Activity: Workshops for updating seniors job profile

Topic addressed: Attraction and retention of senior workers

Target group: Seniors, groups of 5 people per session

Estimated duration and frequency: 2 hours, once a month

Objectives and description: Foster communication between younger and older workers as well as mutual learning. Update seniors' competences according to new jargon.

Guidelines for implementation: Managers have an essential role in the initiation and implementation of the activity: they should gather volunteers amongst older workers (participants) and younger workers (instructors) and agree on the structure of the sessions. The juniors train the seniors with ICT tools to update and structure their competences, and if considered relevant they teach them how to use professional social networks such as LinkedIn or Viadéo. These workshops aim at drafting a skills assessment to redirect, if necessary, senior workers in another field of work. It helps managers to design new jobs to suit changed capacities of (older) workers.

Implementation (material, context, location): Junior workers lead this type of workshop with the support of managers, inside the company. They train seniors with ICT tools to update and structure their competences, and if considered relevant they teach them how to use professional social networks such as LinkedIn or Viadéo. These workshops aim at drafting a skills assessment to redirect, if necessary, senior workers in another field of work. It helps managers to design new jobs to suit changed capacities of (older) workers.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Questionnaire (anonymous if needed) and roundtables

Resources and material needed: Computer, internet, available room

9. Activity: Company book/videos with functions and testimonies

Topic addressed: Attraction and retention of senior workers

Target group: All workers

Estimated duration and frequency: The book is permanent and must be regularly updated

Objectives and description: Value workers

Guidelines for implementation: Top line / HR managers can supervise the redaction of the book.





Workers show their motivation by writing testimonies of important moments they spent in the company. There are also comments from persons that left the company. The book exists online and offline. The offline book is accessible in the company, and the online book is accessible on the company website.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Oral feedback

Resources and material needed: Printer, book, computer

10. Activity: Entry and exit interviews

Topic addressed: Attraction and retention of senior workers

Target group: Individual interviews for workers that entry or quit/retire from the company

Estimated duration: 20 min

Objectives and description: Understand workers motivations, measure their level of satisfaction, improve adhesion to company values

Guidelines for implementation: External experts interview new workers after one year to understand if the company met their expectations and why. Exit interviews are also useful. The choice of external experts allows workers to speak more freely than with their managers. After the interview, the expert writes the manager a report.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Anonymous questionnaire

Resources and material needed: Workers history (CV etc), External expert

4.3 Activities to foster the transfer and retention of knowledge

11. Training to use apps in Smartphones

Topic addressed: Transfer and retention of knowledge

Target group: Senior workers

Estimated duration and frequency: 2 hours each month

Objectives and description: Junior workers train seniors to use applications on mobile and tablets that are related to job organisation (like agenda, reminder, emails ...) , leisure (games, news etc) or the use of apps facilitating their daily lives (public transport app, apps allowing to pay their taxes or access public administration services). The teaching method will be playful.





Guidelines for implementation: Juniors and managers can design the training inspiring of existing material; managers should also disseminate the activity.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Questionnaire

Resources and material needed: Smartphone, internet, available room

12. Activity: Create a database of retired workers or alumni

Topic addressed: Transfer and retention of knowledge

Target group: All workers

Estimated duration: Should be updated regularly

Objectives and description: Keep track of the workers that participated in the company, give them recognition, list their competences

Guidelines for implementation: Can be supervised by HR managers who draft an Excel file with the names and email addresses of retired people and with some extra comments (education, training, activities in the company, if the worker was specialised in some particular issue etc). The data base can be consulted by all workers and should be divulgated. More particularly, it can be used to organise Christmas parties, company events and multigenerational days.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Oral feedback

Resources and material needed: Computer, excel file, printed version

13. Activity: Create material to transmit knowledge (pictures and videos)

Topic addressed: Transfer and retention of knowledge

Frequency: Every time there is a new machine/method of working

Objectives and description: This activity allows generations to share their knowledge during the training; it valorises workers in the company and gives them visibility in order to stimulate engagement.

Guidelines for implementation: The content of the material should be coordinated by managers and disseminated by all. Junior workers can videotape, record audio messages or take pictures of seniors' daily work. Thus, it becomes easier to transfer knowledge. Writing takes a lot of time contrary to using a camera or a recorder. It is essential to widely share the videos inside the company. Those can notably serve to facilitate the transition when a worker leaves the company or retire.



Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Questionnaire, dialogue with managers

Resources and material needed: Camera, Smartphone, recorder, video-projector

14. Activity: Communication board with post-its with colour codes (red, orange, yellow) in the relaxation room – two types of boards one about work another about leisure

Topic addressed: Transfer and retention of knowledge

Target group: All

Frequency: Post-its changed every week

Objectives and description: Allow workers to share formal and non-formal knowledge, communicate about their interests and hobbies and eventually come together.

Guidelines for implementation: The workers stick post it on the boards to express their needs (professional and nonprofessional). Each post it means a message: red (“requires urgent attention”), orange (“address if we have the resources”) and green (“we’re doing fine”).

For instance, if a worker must use a machine but doesn’t know how to use it, he can stick a red post it and write what he needs on it (training...). Another example is a worker who should prepare a meeting in English in 3 weeks, he needs an English speaker, so he can stick a red post it, and the skilled person will respond with a green post it.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Oral feedback

Resources and material needed: Post-it, common room

4.4 Activities to foster the creation of multigenerational teams

15. Activity: The organisation of sport, board games and social games and tournaments

Topic addressed: Creation of multigenerational teams

Target group: All workers (rules to constitute teams change according to the game selected)

Estimated duration and frequency: The duration and frequency of tournaments is decided by the participants. It is possible to organise one single match.

Objectives and description: The goal is to impulse informal activities between workers of different sectors and age groups provided they have a shared interest in a common sport or board game.



Guidelines for implementation: Should be organised outside working hours and preferably outside the company. Participants volunteer and there is one organiser per tournament in charge of inscription, keeping track of the agenda and scores and advertising the activity (possibly with the help of HR managers).

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Oral feedback

Resources and material needed: Depends on the tournament (ball, board game, score board etc)

16. Activity: Organisation of seminars

Topic addressed: Creation of multigenerational teams

Target group: All workers

Estimated duration: Half a day, twice a year

Objectives and description: Seminars can allow for intergenerational communication as well as formal and informal integration (discussing working methods, meeting colleagues, formation in new technologies, workshops and recreational activities)

Guidelines for implementation: Seminars should be organised by top managers and HR managers. Workers can suggest activities. Ideas: presentation of different sectors, roundtables on different subjects, sport and board game tournament, nonviolent communication and role-playing workshops, technical workshops, movie night, trails, picnics

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Anonymous questionnaire

Resources and material needed: Depends on the budget and activity planned

17. Activity: Drafting a management project in duo

Topic addressed: Creation of multigenerational teams

Target group: Senior and junior workers

Estimated duration: 20 min

Objectives and description: Communication between workers, valorisation of their skills, mutual learning. Juniors and seniors can bring their vision of leadership and hierarchy in a document that will be given to the managers. The objective is to compare the ideas about management.

Guidelines for implementation: These duos are organised/approved by line managers with volunteering workers. The manager should provide a clear mission and a template.





Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Anonymous questionnaire, roundtables

Resources and material needed: Template given by managers

18. Activity: Observation day and exchange of tasks

Topic addressed: Creation of multigenerational teams

Target group: Senior and junior workers

Estimated duration: 2h

Objectives and description: Communication between workers, valorisation of their skills, mutual learning.

Guidelines for implementation: For 2 hours, junior workers take the place of senior workers. The next week, senior workers take the place of junior workers. The managers observe the situation and there is a debriefing after each situation.

Tips for evaluation and reflexion after the activity: Anonymous questionnaire, roundtables

Resources and material needed: Schedule





5 Annex

Consult the PPT provided in Annex for the design of the on-the-job activities.



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